

Wichita is the outstanding example built in the Midwest and one of the few that hasn't been "updated" over the years. The architect and designers skillfully integrated in their design many of the various phases of Art Deco, from the early to Frank Lloyd Wright, to the strictly Moderne. Other stores worthy of mention are Burdines in Miami, Kroger's in Cincinnati, and Bloomingdale's and Macy's in New York. The outstanding landmark Rosenberg's in Santa Rosa, California, is abandoned and in danger of demolition.

#### STORE: SEARS SURVEYED: 14

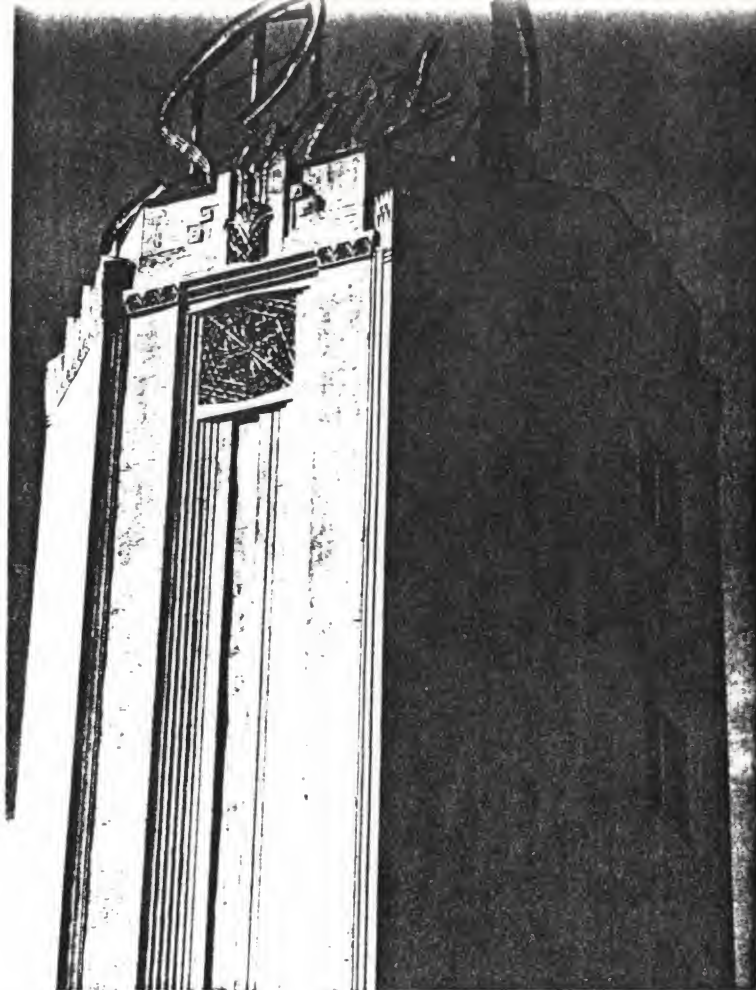
Sears, Roebuck & Company pioneered the art of mail-order sales and became tremendously successful. After only a brief stay in Minneapolis the headquarters was moved to more centrally located Chicago, where it remains to this day. As the company grew and much of the population shifted to the cities, Sears began opening retail stores. In the late 1920s, Sears commissioned the Chicago firm of Nimmons, Carr & Wright to design a number of stores and distribution centers around the country. The firm chose to use a large tower with a vertical illuminated Sears sign in order to give the stores an identity, the store thus becoming a huge billboard. Decorative details were done in the French Zigzag style. Only a few of these ranties remain today. Among the largest is Boston's now-closed sprawling nine-story mail-order distribution center with its slender fifteen-story tower. Another beautiful example is on Biscayne Boulevard in Miami. Sears abandoned the Biscayne Boulevard store and it has been crumbling ever since. This tale is taken up in the Miami chapter.

By the 1930s, the Sears stores took on a more streamlined look. Large stores were built in cities, with smaller ones in less-populated areas. This was the Sears style well into the 1940s and 1950s. An outstanding example is the Brooklyn store on Bedford Street just behind the once-glorious Loew's Kings Theater on Flatbush Avenue.

#### STORE: S.H. KRESS SURVEYED: 19

This chain store, more than any other, was responsible for bringing Art Deco to Main Street U.S.A. In 1931, Kress hired Edward F. Sibbert as in-house architect, and he quickly redesigned the chain's image. Sibbert frequently used regional imagery in his decorative details, specifying polychromed terra-cotta in order to enliven the store façades.

The best example we found was in the Church Street Station historic district in downtown Orlando, Florida. The building is L-shaped with two façades, each slightly different, on each of Orlando's two main streets. It is no longer a



*Sears, Roebuck & Company, 1300 Biscayne Boulevard, Miami, Florida. Architect: Nimmons, Carr & Wright, 1929. Sears apparently erected stores with the same speed and efficiency with which it delivered sewing machines and watches. Most of the stores were by the same "house" architectural firm. As seen in this example, they featured a prominent tower with "Sears" on top and a long vertical illuminated signage strip displaying Sears's full name. One of the first Art Deco buildings in Miami, this was donated to Dade County in 1990 to become part of a proposed performing arts complex. Preservationists are worried about its future, but the Miami Design Preservation League has mobilized to save it.*

Kress store, but still provides attractive downtown retail space. Another great former Kress enjoying another life is the one in Los Angeles's southern seaport neighborhood of San Pedro. Here Sibbert used aerial views of ships entering port on the decorative panels. Probably the most visible of the remaining Kress stores is the one now housing the Frederick's of Hollywood business.

Other Kress stores listed on the National Register are Anniston, Iowa (NR 1985), Huntsville, Alabama (NR 1980), and Sarasota, Florida (NR 1984).





So far, it seems they are interested for the very reason that it is a unique and beautiful historic district. Everyone seems inclined to work together with the City of Miami Beach to ensure that it stays that way.

This is a happy place to wind down this story of the lively teenage years of Barbara Capitan's Art Deco District. May the next twenty years be even better.

As for the hundreds of Miami Beach Art Deco buildings that have not been mentioned here, we pray that our readers will buy MDPL's *Art Deco Guide* by Keith Root, or Barbara's previous book, *Deco Delights*, which deals exclusively with that subject and is filled with absolutely stunning photographs taken by our friend Steven Brooke.

## ELSEWHERE

### Miami

Across Biscayne Bay from Art Deco Miami Beach is the much larger city of Miami. Here are a few extraordinary examples of Art Deco architecture that we should mention:

The earliest Art Deco building in Miami is a fraternal lodge, the Scottish Rite Temple at 471 Northwest Third



**Pan American Seaplane Base and Passenger Terminal at Dinner Key (Miami City Hall),** 3500 Pan American Way, Coconut Grove. Miami. ARCHITECT: Deano & Adrien, 1931. The great Pan American Airways began mail service to Havana, Cuba from Key West, Florida in 1927. A year later operations moved to Coconut Grove (just after the bayside village was annexed to Miami). This terminal opened in 1934, becoming an integral part of Pan Am's worldwide Clipper seaplane network. It was also the embarkation point for Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers's famed adventure *Flying Down to Rio*, their first film together made in 1936. But seaplane service became obsolete as planes moved to dry land. In 1945, the city of Miami took over the building for their City Hall. Pan Am used the same architect for its Marine Air Terminal at La Guardia Airport (see *Travel* chapter). (Photograph by Steven Brooke, copyright © 1994, used by permission.)

**Mahi Shrine Temple (Boulevard Shops),** 1401 Biscayne Boulevard, Miami. ARCHITECT: Robert Law Weed, 1930. Restoration architect Andres Fabregas for Bouterse, Perez & Fabregas, 1979. Built by one of Miami's finest Art Deco architects, this commercial landmark on Miami's main thoroughfare, Biscayne Boulevard, has seen many uses. Art Deco decoration often incorporated local folklore, flora, and fauna. Here the architect has had Semole figures carved on the corners of the limestone facade. Now owned by Knight-Ridder, the newspaper and communications corporation, the building's future is uncertain, as the county wants to put a new Performing Arts Center on the site. (Photograph by Andres Fabregas, courtesy the Capitan Archives.)

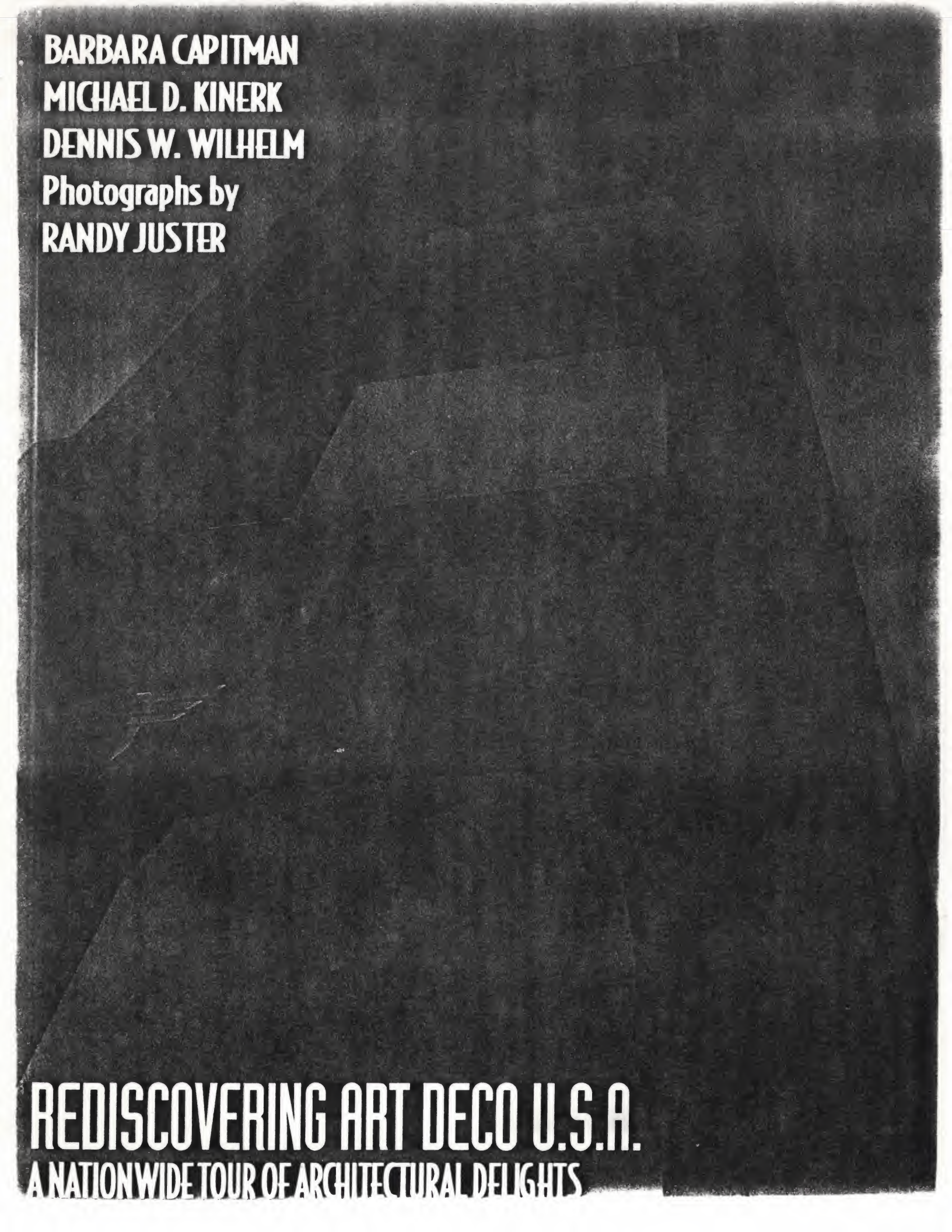
Street, by Kiehnel & Elliott, which was built in 1922 at the start of the King Tut Egyptian Revival craze. It is a classical Egypto-Deco building with great stonework and carving outside, as well as outstanding carved woodwork inside.

The second important fraternal lodge building is the Mahi Shrine Temple (last called the Boulevard Shops) at 1401 Biscayne Boulevard, designed in 1930 by Robert Law Weed. This building was restored by Andres Fabregas as a

historic project because it was a leading building in the development of Biscayne Boulevard's upper extension in the early 1930s. Currently, it is awaiting its fate, for a county performing-arts center is proposed for the site, and demolition is a continuing possibility. Also endangered by the same arts-center plan is the Sears store directly across the street at 1400 Biscayne Boulevard, by Nimmons, Carr & Wright, 1929. Sears donated the store to Dade County to help it assemble the site for the proposed arts center. Deco District preservationists are lobbying the county to preserve the building as an integral part of the new complex.

whitewashing its Art Deco every conceivable theme in the metalwork. Ignace Jan P from Poland pains to re Shoumate's tect many ritual execution





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**REDISCOVERING ART DECO U.S.A.**

**A NATIONWIDE TOUR OF ARCHITECTURAL DELIGHTS**